

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: GREEK AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH CLARK CLIFFORD

1. GREEK AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRAKIS, AT HIS REQUEST, MET MARCH 17 WITH THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, CLARK CLIFFORD. ALSO PRESENT DURING ONE HOUR MEETING WERE AMBASSADOR KUBISCH, COUNSELOR-DESIGNATE NIMETZ, AND EUR/SE DIRECTOR LEDSKY.

2. ALEXANDRAKIS REFERRED TO THE EXCELLENT BRIEFING HE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED FROM NIMETZ, AND ASKED CLIFFORD IF HE WOULD BE WILLING TO GO INTO GREATER DETAIL ABOUT TURKISH
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ATTITUDES WITH RESPECT TO THE AEGEAN. CLIFFORD AGREED TO DO SO, AND BRIEFLY DESCRIBED WHAT THE TURKS HAD SAID ABOUT THE MAKE-UP OF THEIR AEGEAN ARMY, AND THEIR POSITIONS ON CONTINENTAL SHELF AND AEGEAN AIR SPACE QUESTIONS. CLIFFORD ALSO EXPLAINED HOW GREEK CONCERNS ON THESE ISSUES HAD BEEN BROUGHT DIRECTLY TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HIGHEST TURKISH OFFICIALS. THIS HE CHARACTERIZED AS THE CHIEF VALUE OF

HIS DISCUSSIONS IN ANKARA. CLIFFORD SAID THE TURKS NOW FULLY UNDERSTAND GREEK POSITIONS, THUS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCING THE DANGER OF MISCALCULATION. THEY ALSO KNOW THE EXTENT OF U.S. INTEREST AND OUR WISH THAT THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN OUR GREEK AND TURKISH ALLIES BE RESOLVED PEACEFULLY.

3. ALEXANDRAKIS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR CLIFFORD'S EFFORTS IN ANKARA, BUT COMPLAINED THAT TURKS, RATHER THAN WORKING TO LOWER TENSIONS, WERE CONSTANTLY INFLAMING THE SITUATION THROUGH ILL-ADVISED UNILATERAL ACTS. THIS MONTH THERE WERE TO BE AIR EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN. NEXT MONTH THE THREAT OF A FURTHER SEISMIC EXPEDITION IN THE AEGEAN HUNG OVER GREEK HEADS. THE TURKS IN ADDITION WERE SIDE-STEPPING GREEK EFFORTS TO SCHEDULE A FURTHER ROUND OF CONTINENTAL SHELF TALKS. IN THIS SITUATION, ATHENS COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO WELCOME A U.S. DECISION TO LIFT THE TURKISH ARMS EMBARGO OR TO URGE CONGRESSIONAL PASSAGE OF THE TURKISH-U.S. DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT. ALEXANDRAKIS ASKED IF CLIFFORD HAD INDEED MADE RECOMMENDATIONS ALONG THESE LINES TO PRESIDENT CARTER.

4. CLIFFORD SAID HIS MISSION HAS MADE A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT HOW OUR RELATIONS WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN MIGHT BE IMPROVED. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE STILL UNDER STUDY BY THE ADMINISTRATION. THE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH RESPECT TO TURKEY HAD BEEN FORMULATED AS A RESULT OF THE ANKARA VISIT AND THE COOPERATION WHICH THE TURKS HAD DISPLAYED. THE RECOMMENDATIONS ALSO REFLECTED THE FACT THAT TURKEY WAS AN IMPORTANT NATO

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ALLY AND THAT U.S. INTERESTS DICTATED THAT WE WORK IN A STEP-BY-STEP FASHION TO RESTORE U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS TO THEIR PREVIOUS HEALTHY STATE. BASED ON BOTH THESE FACTORS, THE MISSION HAD RECOMMENDED THAT ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY BE RAISED SOMEWHAT IN FY 1978 FROM PREVIOUS LEVELS. THE MISSION HAD ALSO RECOMMENDED, IN PRINCIPLE, U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE U.S.-TURKISH DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT, BUT HAD NOT SUGGESTED IMMEDIATE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THIS DOCUMENT.

5. CLIFFORD EXPLAINED THE RECOMMENDATIONS HE HAD MADE TO THE ADMINISTRATION WERE IN NO SENSE DIRECTED AGAINST GREECE. IN FACT, HE BELIEVED THAT A STEP-BY-STEP IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS WOULD WORK TO THE BENEFIT OF OUR EQUALLY IMPORTANT GREEK ALLY. WHAT WAS IMPORTANT AT THE MOMENT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS OF SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ON CYPRUS. WE SEEMED TO HAVE WON TURKISH COOPERATION IN THIS AREA. THE GREEK CYPRIOTS HAD ALSO INDICATED THEY WOULD MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION IN

VIENNA. SUPPORT BY GREECE FOR THIS NEGOTIATING PROCESS WOULD BE EXCEEDINGLY USEFUL, SINCE RESOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM WAS BOUND TO HAVE A POSITIVE CARRY-OVER EFFECT ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS.

6. ALEXANDRAKIS SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD DO ALL IT COULD TO ASSIST THE CYPRUS NEGOTIATING PROCESS. HE SAID HE WAS

ALSO PERSONALLY IMPRESSED WITH THE LOGIC OF THE CLIFFORD RECOMMENDATIONS AS THEY HAD BEEN EXPLAINED TO HIM. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THERE WAS BOUND TO BE GREAT SENSITIVITY IN GREECE ABOUT ANY RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH POINTED TO THE DESIRABILITY OF GIVING INCREASING AMOUNTS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY. THE GOVERNMENT OF GREECE MIGHT COMPREHEND THE REASONS BEHIND SUCH A POLICY, BUT IT WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THIS ACROSS TO THE MAN IN THE STREET.

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7. ALEXANDRAKIS CLOSED CONVERSATION BY THANKING CLIFFORD FOR HIS BRIEFING, AND FOR THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION WHICH HE AND HIS MISSION HAD MADE TO RESOLVING THE MANY PROBLEMS OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND RESTORING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND THE UNITED STATES.

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